Berkshire Mountain

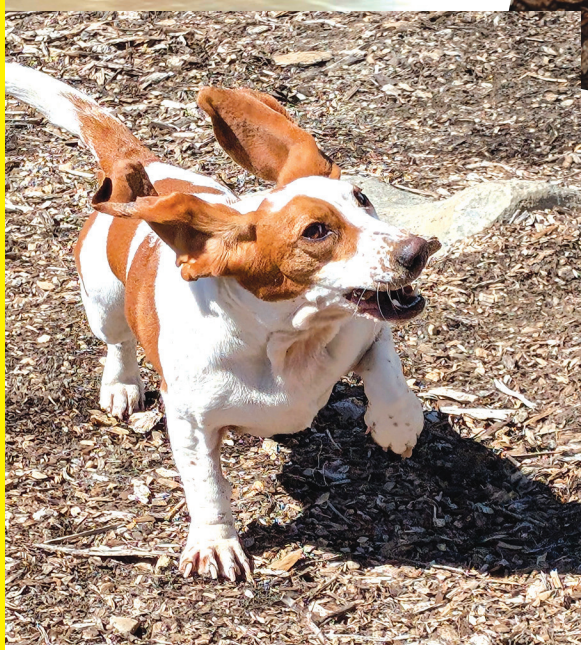
Animal World

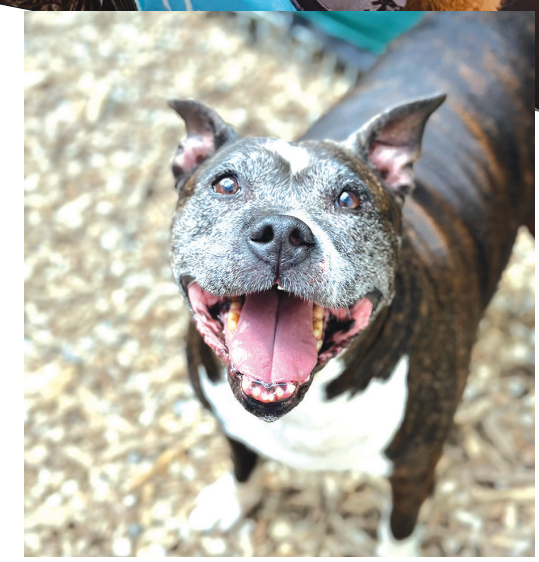
The Real Premier Monthly All Pet AniMagazine™

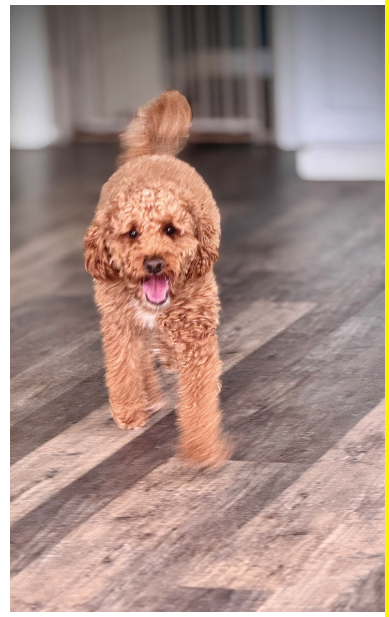
HEARTH & HOUND

- *PET DAY CARE*
- *BOARDING*
- *GROOMING*

Lee, MA







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JUNE, 2026

Berkshire Humane Society
214 Barker Rd, , Pittsfield, MA 01201
Phone: (413) 447-7878, Berkshirehumane.org

Meet **Stewart Little and Piggy Smalls**, the dynamic duo of guinea pig cuteness who were abandoned in an apartment and are now living their best lives at Berkshire Humane Society. Stewart Little is a tan and white Abyssinian, while Piggy Smalls is a black and white short coat, both being adult males. Initially, they were a bit shy, but after consistent handling and attention from the staff and volunteers, they're now charming fellows who love quiet attention, head scratches, and snacks (who doesn't?!). They're perfect for anyone who wants a lower-maintenance, high-reward pet that'll give you unconditional love without taking over your entire apartment. If you're interested in a pair of piggie companions who are ready for a new, committed home, contact Berkshire Humane Society's small animal staff at (413) 447-7878 ext. 124 or felineservices@berkshirehumane.org to learn more about Stewart Little and Piggy Smalls!

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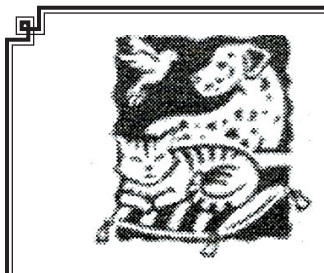

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- [a] National Zoo and Aquarium Month

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- Pet Appreciation Week
- Animal Rights Awareness Week
- Take Your Pet to Work Week®
- National Pollinator Week

Awareness Days

- International Sheltie Day
- National Greyhound Day
- International Corgi Day
- Hug Your Cat Day
- World Sea Turtle Day
- Take Your Cat to Work Day®
- National Dachshund Day
- National Pet Choking Prevention Day
- Cat World Domination Day
- World Day Against the Abandonment of Domestic Animals

Give your pets a hug for me!! Gayle

Berkshire Animal World

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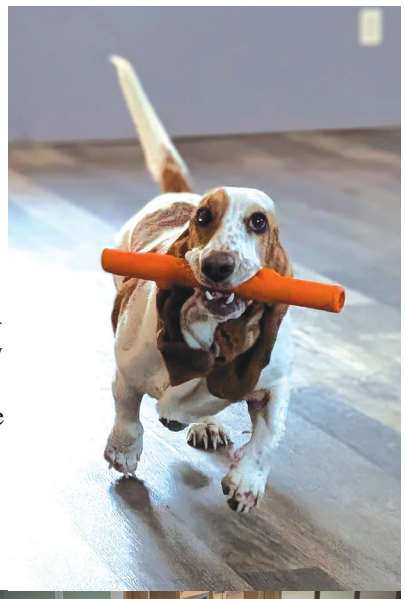
Front Photo Credit: Hearth and Hound, a petcare, boarding and grooming facility for both dogs and cats in Lee, MA. These are photos provided by Hearth and Hound of their clients having a wonderful time. Stop by and visit at 915 Pleasant Street in Lee, MA., hearthandhoundlee@outlook.com, 413-394-4014

SPOTLIGHT

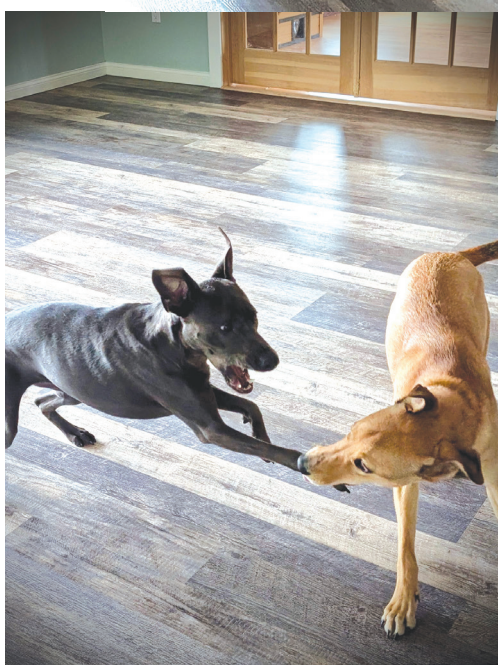
Hearth and Hound in Lee, Ma for your Dog or Cat Grooming, Daycare & Boarding

By Gayle Schecky



Alexis, the owner of Hearth and Hound has a very kind, patient demeanor. She was a human nurse for many years before moving forward with her dream to work full-time with dogs. Hearth and Hound offers the community a safe and happy place where people feel comfortable leaving their beloved family members.

"I am a nurse turned dog daycare operator, says Alexis, and I run my facility with the same compassion, intuition and calm leadership that I once brought to the bedside. Safety and happiness are my number one concerns for the animals so I am very particular that the dogs are having fun in a safe, controlled manner."



She continued, "The dogs that stay with us are fed and cared for according to their owners' specifications. It's the same with medication administration. We use a medication administration record that is the same kind of record that I used at the hospital when I was a bedside nurse, to make sure we don't miss anything or make any mistakes."

In addition to all the many and wonderful procedures and creative ways Hearth and Hound work with the dogs and their owners, they send out daily report cards for all of their daycare and boarding customers!

The report cards says what the dog did for the day, how their mood was, who they played with and the staff sends owners photos of them playing with their friends.

For thanksgiving they celebrate by making turkey paw prints that are sent home.

Playtime is included for daycare and boarding dogs with daily enrichment activities: snuffle mats, puzzle games, training for basic commands, pool or sand pit fun, bubbles, ball pits and more. Every breed gets different enrichments that they like; terriers end up spending a lot of time in the sand pit to release their natural instinct to dig and scent dogs will spend more time with the puzzle games and snuffle mats.

For boarding, they have a total of eight fenced in areas so if a dog doesn't play with others well, there is a space for him to get human interaction and have time with enrichment activities. Dogs don't have to be in play group to come stay at Hearth and Hound. If they are introverted, elders or moody, there are plenty of activities they can participate in and never spend time without attention.

There are no restrictions of age at Hearth and Hound, as they have vet techs on staff for more complicated administration of medication.

Hearth and Hound boards cats as well. Cats have their own separate special space with catios. If you have a small critter that needs boarding or daycare, they take care of them, too. Owners need to have their own cage.

When asked how they protect dogs of different sizes from hurting each other if playing gets rough, the answer for Alexis was easy. They have multiple play groups running everyday and they are planned around size and temperament.

"Free time is not run like a dog park. All play is structured. We never let the dogs chase one dog around. It may look like fun but can quickly turn dangerous. One-on-one play time with a staff member is offered and the staff gives the dogs many pauses and breaks," said Alexis.

When they are sleeping or eating they are safely in a kennel away from other dogs.

GROOMING

The newest and most exciting addition to the facility is Caylee, who began grooming seven years ago when she started as a bather. She worked her way into the field by learning different techniques from different groomers.

Caylee's connection with dogs is very fulfilling to her. She loves to form a bond and develop a relationship with each of her dog clients and gets satisfaction from making dogs clean and look pretty. She even loves to try different styles and hair colors.

Recently, she did a Miami cut on a standard poodle and she said it looked so cute.

Right now she grooms on Wednesdays and Thursdays, starting at 9:00 am. She works with four or five dogs a day, where each dog takes about an hour and a half. The dogs don't have to be daycare or boarding clients. You can go to Hearth and Hound just for grooming.

Caylee works with each dog to make them comfortable and develop trust, adjust to the tools and receive a bath. She likes to see them excited to come back for the next groom!

"It's fun to do different styles.We haven't used dyes yet, but we will be using dog safe dyes," she exclaimed.

The dog grooming at the facility adds convenience for the daycare and the boarding customers because the dogs get spa time during the day or before they go home to go to sleep. It's one less thing that the dog owners have to worry about but that doesn't exclude anyone coming to the facility for just grooming.

"Grooming can be scary. Caylee just has this natural ability where all the dogs just take to her and love her right off the bat," says Alexis.

Caylee also has experience grooming cats. Cats come to grooming usually when they have longer hair and mat up easily. It harder for owners to keep up with their coats.

"I used to give my cat the lion cut and she really looked cute," says Caylee. Alexis added that it definitely helps with hair balls to keep their hair short.

Caylee also works with elder dogs and puppies. Grooming elder dogs means being more aware of how to lift them and how they feel during the process. She says she keeps a sharp eye on the body language of her clients so she knows if something triggers them.

Caylee works on one dog at a time, and they are free to roam in the grooming room which makes it less scary. They are not crated. It definitely makes them feel more comfortable and happy.

Hearth and Hound offers nail clipping seven days a week for $15.00. They offer cat nail clipping and guinea pig nail clipping only during the weekdays.

"After being in the hospital, I loved being a bedside nurse, but it can be sad always caring for people when they are ill and now I get to bring the same care to dogs who are super excited and happy all the time. It translates very well and is very uplifting," adds Alexis.

Hearth and Hound is open seven days a week. Daycare is 7am to 6 pm. They offer half days and full days and hourly rates. Hourly rates are liked by customers if they drop the dog off before going to the gym or out to dinner. Then they pick them up on the way home. It assures the dogs are tired and ready for a nap or bed! Late pick-ups need to be requested. **Stop by and visit at 915 Pleasant Street in Lee, MA., hearthandhoundlee@outlook.com, 413-394-4014**

Cure for Hairballs in Cats? Try These Hairball Remedies

Dr. Debra Primovic - DVM

CATS' MEOW!

Hairballs may be one of the least glamorous parts of living with a cat, but they are extremely common, especially in long-haired breeds and heavy groomers. If you've ever heard your cat making hacking noises in the middle of the night, you've likely experienced the unpleasant reality of a cat hairball.

While occasional hairballs are usually normal, frequent vomiting, constipation, or repeated gagging may point to a larger problem. Understanding the causes, symptoms, and the best hairball treatment for cats can help keep your feline healthy and comfortable.

What Are Hairballs in Cats?

Hairballs, medically known as trichobezoars, form when cats swallow loose fur during grooming. A cat's tongue contains tiny hook-like structures that trap dead hair and debris. Most swallowed hair passes harmlessly through the digestive tract and exits in the stool. However, some hair can remain in the stomach and clump together into a hairball.

Eventually, the cat will usually vomit the hairball back up. Hairballs are often tubular rather than round because they pass through the esophagus during regurgitation.

Although occasional hairballs are considered normal, excessive hairballs can become dangerous. In severe cases, they may cause intestinal blockages that require veterinary treatment or surgery.

Why Some Cats Get More Hairballs Than Others

Certain cats are more prone to hairballs than others. Long-haired breeds like the Maine Coon or Persian naturally ingest more fur during grooming. Cats that shed heavily or groom excessively may also develop frequent hairballs. Other factors that increase hairball risk include skin allergies, stress, digestive issues or poor diet.

Signs and Symptoms of Hairballs

The most recognizable sign of a cat hairball is the classic gagging or retching sound followed by vomiting. However, symptoms can vary depending on whether the hairball is moving normally through the digestive tract or causing an obstruction.

Common symptoms include: hacking or coughing, vomiting hair, food, or clear fluid, gagging without producing a hairball, constipation, decreased appetite, lethargy, abdominal discomfort, dry heaving or loss of energy.

When Hairballs Become Dangerous

Most hairballs pass without causing major issues, but repeated vomiting is not considered normal. If your cat is frequently producing hairballs or struggling unsuccessfully to vomit, contact your veterinarian. These symptoms may indicate an intestinal blockage, which can become life-threatening without prompt treatment. Seek veterinary care immediately if your cat experiences persistent vomiting, unproductive retching, refusal to eat, severe lethargy or difficulty breathing.

Options

Fortunately, there are many ways to reduce and manage hairballs. The ideal cat hairball remedy often involves a combination of grooming, diet, hydration, and digestive support.

1. Regular Grooming

Frequent (daily for long-haired) brushing is one of the simplest and most effective ways to reduce hairballs. Removing loose fur before your cat swallows it helps minimize hair accumulation in the stomach.Professional grooming may also help cats with thick or difficult-to-maintain coats.

2. Hairball Control Diets

Many pet food companies now offer specialized hairball-control formulas. These diets are designed to improve digestion and help hair move through the gastrointestinal tract more efficiently.

Hairball-control foods typically contain: increased fiber, digestive-support ingredients, omega fatty acids and improved protein quality

Fiber is particularly important because it helps move swallowed hair through the intestines rather than allowing it to collect in the stomach. If your cat experiences chronic hairballs, ask your veterinarian whether a prescription or over-the-counter hairball diet could help.

3. Hairball Lubricants

Petroleum-based lubricants are a common hairball treatment for cats. Products such as Laxatone help lubricate the digestive tract so hairballs can pass more easily.

They may come in flavored gels, pastes, or chewable forms.

Some owners place a small amount on the cat's paw so the cat licks it off during grooming.

Always follow dosing instructions carefully and consult your veterinarian to make sure it is safe.

4. Hairball Treats

Many cats enjoy specially formulated hairball treats.

5. **Increase Hydration**

Proper hydration supports healthy digestion and may help prevent hair from forming large masses in the stomach.

To encourage your cat to drink more water:

• Offer fresh water daily
• Use cat water fountains
• Feed canned or wet food
• Add water or broth to meals

Wet food diets are especially beneficial for cats prone to constipation or digestive issues.

6. **Reduce Excessive Grooming**

If your cat suddenly develops frequent hairballs, excessive grooming may be the underlying issue. Stress, boredom, skin allergies, fleas, or pain can all trigger overgrooming.

Addressing the root cause may significantly reduce hairball problems. Environmental enrichment can also help, like plattime, toys and scratching posts

Natural Ways to Help Prevent Hairballs

Some owners prefer natural approaches to cure hairballs cats experience regularly.

Natural options include:

• Pumpkin puree for added fiber
• Omega-3 fatty acids
• Increased hydration
• High-fiber diets
• Coconut oil in small veterinarian-approved amounts

Always discuss supplements or home remedies with your veterinarian before trying them.

Is There a Permanent Cure for Hairballs in Cats?

There is no absolute permanent cure for hairballs in cats, because grooming is a natural feline behavior. However, consistent prevention can dramatically reduce how often hairballs occur.

For many cats, a combination of:

• Regular brushing
• Proper nutrition
• Hairball-control products
• Increased hydration
• Routine veterinary care

can nearly eliminate chronic hairball issues.

If your cat suddenly develops worsening hairballs, your veterinarian may recommend testing to rule out digestive disease, food allergies, inflammatory bowel disease, or other medical conditions.

Final Thoughts on Hairball Treatment for Cats

Hairballs are common, but they should not become a constant problem. Occasional hairballs are usually harmless, but repeated vomiting or signs of digestive distress deserve veterinary attention.

The best cat hairball remedy focuses on prevention through grooming, hydration, diet, and digestive support. With the right care, many cats can experience fewer hairballs and improved overall comfort.

If you are concerned about frequent vomiting, constipation, or changes in your cat's grooming habits, consult your veterinarian for guidance on the safest and most effective hairball treatment for cats.*www.petplace.com*

This Side of Purradise

by Iris Bass

Two-fer Forever Love!

Gray-and-white Nellie and tricolor (orange, white, and black) Patches are a pair, and would like to stay that way, especially as they probably started out together, both being 10 years old (58 in human years), brought to Berkshire Humane Society from the same household.

If you and your family desire companionship, they'd fit the bill: both are cuddlers, likely to join you in bed and for lap time, and—not all cats are so accommodating—both are fine with other cats, dogs, and children!!! Alas, their previous person's health needs threw a monkey wrench into their enjoying so much mutual affection in their last home.

Please make up for their loss by adopting them together in Berkshire Humane Society's Buddy Program, with the extra kicker that their adoption fees have been covered by the Danny Boy adoption Fund.

Just a couple of pointers: Keep in mind that they will arrive with distinctively different personalities, despite their closeness; indeed, part of the fun of taking them home together will be to discover and work with what makes each of these ladies unique. Yes, they are no longer kittens, but remember to provide them with a variety of toys (my two eldercats, well into their teens, still bat and carry theirs around); and provide them with a few options for lounging around or retreating, such as several kitty beds or mats in different areas, in case each might like some alone time from each other or your family. Please keep them strictly indoors, for their health and safety. Creating a soft, welcome place for them on a sturdy surface next to a sunny window may become one of their favorite spots in your home—to enjoy the outdoors while comfortably inside!

Iris Bass, coauthor of the Cat Lover's Daily Companion, shares her Lee home with two shelter cats. Please contact Berkshire Humane Society's main shelter at 214 Barker Road, Pittsfield, MA, 413-447-7878. Confirm its hours before heading over, or check out https//:berkshirehumane.org to read more about Ava or the other cats currently available for adoption there or at Purradise, 301 Stockbridge Road, Great Barrington, MA, 413-717-4244. Purradise is open for both adoptions and boarding. Please respect any COVID-19 protocols that may be in place at either shelter.

Nellie on the left, patches on the top right.

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Columbia-Greene HUMANE SOCIETY/SPCA

Lyon is an 8-year-old Shepherd mix who has been looking for a home for over 3 months. Don't let his age fool you; he's a giant puppy at heart and is very playful, especially when fetch is involved. Lyon is about 90 pounds, so he'd benefit from a home that has experience handling an extra large dog. He's good with other dogs, however he cannot live with cats. His adoption fee is sponsored.

Please call with any questions.

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Columbia-Greene HUMANE SOCIETY/SPCA

Soft Paws
By Charlene Marchand

Though it may seem many moons ago, our focus today will be a continuation of our discussion on the use of housecrates. This season, many new puppies (we hope all) will be aided in their housebreaking lessons by the proper use of crates. In addition, many adult dogs, transitioning into new home environments, will also find security and comfort within the confines of their man-made dens.

Properly crate-trained dogs learn to relax and rest in the absence of the pack leader, almost eliminating future problems with household destruction and absence-anxiety or distress. These advantages are well known, and have been previously stated in our first article. But some of these good management protocols can be carried to excess. We are definitely seeing a proliferation of problem behaviors, created by excessively crated house dogs. Let's get specific. An 8-10-week-old puppy should NOT be crated for longer than a 3-hour stretch during the day without a break. Though I've known some that will be continent for longer, many young pups will begin to relieve themselves in the crate after a couple of hours. It is not a good habit for the helpless pup to develop, and this in-crate elimination behavior should send an immediate red flag to the family members in charge. Either the pup wasn't properly exercised, or the crate time is too long, or we have an anxiety problem in the making.

With a good breakfast, and sufficient early morning exercise, a canine baby will usually use those two to three crated hours for napping and gnawing. A nice lunch break, with exercise included after "going potty," will result in a lazy afternoon nap before pack leaders come home for dinner, and the real fun begins. Trouble rears its ugly head when we find "Calvin" confined for five, six, seven, or more hours at a stretch, many days per week. Our trying-to-be-perfect-and-please-the-pack-leader-pup has pent up energy galore, and is now being referred to as "hyperactive," "destructive," and "unresponsive." This pup may or may not soil his/her den, but at bedtime is vocalizing about another stint in the den-gone-bad. The pup's "free time" ended up being a few hours of correction and frustration.

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Boarding and Daycare remain the same and the food bank is open 7 days a week. Please call with any questions.
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Self-mutilating behaviors often begin at this stage – excessive licking, spinning, limb-chewing, etc. Inappropriate tail-chasing can begin or be exacerbated by excessive crating, as well as stress-induced barking. Many of you won't like what I'm going to say, but if you must confine a puppy to a crate (a number of days per week) for six or more hours without a break, put off getting one until you can improve your away-from-the-house management, or modify your management protocol. An experienced adult dog may be a horse of a different color, and a better fit for long home-alone hours.

Good quality crates have made it easy to almost always guarantee safe confinement. The public's introduction and education to the benefits of crate training is all well and good, but we must guard against its abuse. We're not talking about a roomy kennel, an ex-pen (exercise pen), or a small yard. Even if a medium-sized dog is crated in a large dog crate, the confinement principle remains the same. Many of my "doggie" clients (who can't speak for themselves) are trying, unsuccessfully, to tell their pack leaders that their behavior problems have a root…it's called too much of a good thing! My "hit list" for proper crate usage will appear next column!

Feel free to call us with any questions at (518) 828-6044 or visit our website at www.cghs.org. Our Food Bank is open to any from the public in need of pet food or for those wishing to donate food from 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. Spay/neuter clinics for cats are $110.00 male or female, including a rabies vaccination and a 5-in-1 feline distemper combination vaccination. Nail clipping services are available every Saturday from 10 to 11 a.m. at the shelter for a donation of $10 for cats and $15 for dogs (currently prepaid only). Charlene Marchand is the Chairperson of the Columbia-Greene Humane Society/SPCA Board of Directors. She may be contacted at cghsaaron@gmail.com.

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HORSE CORRAL

Meet Marlene, Our Newest Rescued Mule

By Alex Valverde, Equine Advocates Communications Manager

Our newest rescued equine, a former Amish Work Mule named Marlene.

Marlene is a gorgeous sorrel Molly Mule who joined the Equine Advocates family on March 25th of this year. While her days moving forward will be better now that she's found a forever home, it will take time for her to adjust and heal from her dark past. Marlene's Amish owners used her for heavy farm work before dumping her at a Pennsylvania slaughter auction when she outlived her usefulness. During her rescue in January, we noticed her right eye was oozing and causing obvious discomfort. She was transported from the auction to a quarantine facility for 30 days. This is a critically important safety measure for any equine who could have been exposed to horses with contagious diseases, including places like the low-end auction where Marlene had been dumped.

"Since the inception of this organization in 1996, we have and will continue to come to the rescue of former Work Horses, Work Mules and Buggy Horses used, abused and scraped for slaughter by Amish and Mennonite farmers," said Equine Advocates President Susan Wagner. "That is exactly what happened to Marlene."

After her quarantine stay, Marlene was transported to Cornell University Hospital for Animals for evaluation and treatment. She was diagnosed with Squamous Cell Carcinoma, a common form of cancer in horses that typically affects older animals. To remove the large cancerous tumor and prevent it from spreading, Dr. Kelly Knickelbein performed an Equine Exenteration, which involved removing Marlene's right eyeball and surrounding tissues.

"The operation was completely successful, and Marlene no longer suffers from the pain caused by that cancerous tumor in her eye," said Wagner. "However, because she had to undergo a major operation, her vet said she could not have a full orthopedic exam while she was healing from the surgery at Cornell. When she finally arrived at the sanctuary, we did not anticipate a soundness problem that proved to be an even greater health challenge for her."

The second day after she came home, we were distressed to find Marlene lying down on the ground and unable to rise on her own. We sent her to our local vets at Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital in Saratoga Springs, New York, where she underwent a full orthopedic exam as her eye incision had healed. A bone scan revealed she was suffering from "numerous orthopedic issues." While at the hospital, Marlene received joint injections in the areas most affected, including her stifles, hocks and several parts of her spine.

"Of the numerous equines we have rescued from the Amish over the years, Marlene's case is by far one of the worst," said Wagner. "It is an outrage that those who continually violate the cruelty laws in their states are not held accountable and charged for the neglect and abuse of the equines they use for work. Marlene is home from the hospital now. We are dealing with her health issues one day at a time. That is all we can do, plus shower her with the care and love she always deserved but never received."

Her birth year is estimated to be around 2010. Since we don't know her exact birth date, we will celebrate her Re-Birth-Day every year on March 25th, the day she began her new life with us at the sanctuary.

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Orion is a handsome 2-year-old mixed breed.Orion is a very energetic boy who thrives on adventure and loves to be outside romping about with his toys. He's currently working on his leash manners

He has a good relationship with other dogs but has a 'rough and tumble' play style, so he'll need a dog who matches his vibe, and he cannot live with cats in his new home. Children aged 14+ would be best for this bouncing ball of energy. please reach out to Berkshire Humane Society's kennel staff for more information at (413) 447-7878 ext.126 or via email at Canineservices@berkshirehumane.org.

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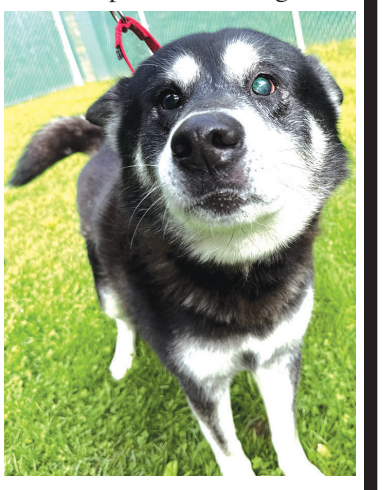
This 7-year-old Siberian husky/German Shepherd mix is a giant cuddle bug who wants nothing more than to snuggle up with his human friends. **Buck** walks beautifully on a leash and is mostly house-trained. Buck has lived with cats and dogs in the past and could live with them again, pending a successful introduction. He is also good with children aged 5+ who respect his special needs, as Buck is mostly blind. But that doesn't stop this lovely boy from enjoying life to the fullest. Buck would love a home where he can snuggle up and receive all the love he deserves. If you are interested in learning more about adopting Buck, please contact Berkshire Humane Society's kennel staff at (413) 447-7878 ext.126 or via email at canineservices@berkshirehumane.org.



JUNE IS PET PREPAREDNESS MONTH

BEFORE THE EMERGENCY

Microchip pets or put a tag on their collar with your name, address and cell phone number so they may be returned quickly in case you are separated from your pets. Be sure that any microchip information is up to date.

Tie down or anchor outside objects that might fly about and injure someone.

Have a plan already established on which family member is responsible for your pet's needs (who will grab the pet, the food, medications, water, disaster preparedness kit, carrier, etc.).

Know a safe place where your pets can go if you need to evacuate or seek shelter. Evacuation destinations may include a friend or family member's home, going to a pet-friendly hotel, or temporarily housing your pet(s) at a boarding facility. Plan multiple routes to your safe destination. Review your evacuation plan and double-check emergency supplies – including, medications, bowls, water, and food.

Evacuate your family and pets as early as you can and remember to take your disaster preparedness kit for your pets (i.e. First Aid kit, leashes, and pets' carrying cases, bowls, sanitation materials, medications, chew toy, minimum 3 days, ideally 7-10 days of food, meds, water, your veterinarian's contact information, a photo of your pet).

Bring outdoor animals inside with a carrier large enough for them to turn around and lie down comfortably.

Have a carrier ready. Portable carriers(s) should be ready to go at a moment's notice. Practice loading cats and dogs into pet carriers before you have to.

If your family must evacuate, take your pets with you.

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Natural Fun Facts

Did you know that . . .

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• The Cocker Spaniel was one of the first purebred American dogs registered by the AKC.

• It also reigned as one of the most popular for many years.

• President Rutherford B. Hayes owned a Cocker Spaniel named "Dot."

• Vice President Richard Nixon owned a Cocker named "Checkers."

• Another contributing factor to the breed's popularity was Disney's Lady & the Tramp, released in 1955.

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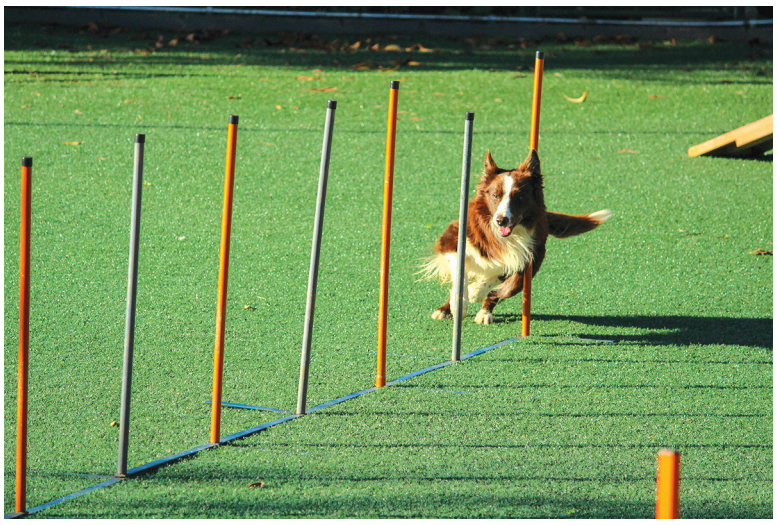
Agility for Dogs

What is agility?

By definition, agility is the ability to change the body's position quickly and efficiently. This kind of nimbleness requires balance, coordination, strength, speed, and endurance. Agile dogs run, jump, and dart about gracefully. Some use their athletic skills to compete in agility trials.



What is an agility trial?

An agility trial is a competitive canine sporting event where dogs of various breeds navigate obstacles and are judged on speed and accuracy. Agility courses are specially designed to demonstrate a dog's athletic ability, level of conditioning, and willingness to work with her handler. Competitions require physical prowess, along with mental concentration.

In a typical agility trial, dogs jump over hurdles, navigate around obstacles, weave through upright poles, run up A-frame structures, trot over elevated walkways, or dash through tunnels. Courses are set up differently at various trials, so the dog depends on her human teammate to guide her through the route. Well-trained dogs focus on their handlers, who give directions through hand signals or verbal prompts.

What are the benefits of agility training?

Agility training can benefit both dog and handler in the following ways:

Agility training uses your dog's natural instincts. Our pet dogs need look no further than the pantry for their next meal, but their ancestors were not so lucky. They had to hunt for their food and became adept at finding and chasing prey in order to survive. Often the chase was difficult. Hungry dogs chased small mammals like rabbits through the woods, over fallen logs, around rocks, up steep embankments, and through narrow passages created by dense underbrush. The hungry dog had to be fast and nimble to ensure his next meal. Agility courses mimic the obstacles a dog in the wild might face in pursuit of dinner and stimulate the dog's natural hunting instinct.

Agility provides good exercise. Some dogs require lots of exercise to burn excess energy, and running through an obstacle course is a great way to do just that. The athletic challenge keeps a dog fit, helps prevent obesity, increases endurance, and strengthens bones and joints. Plus, an agility course exercises a dog's mind, giving her opportunities to learn and solve problems.

Agility training will also help you keep in shape! You will not run through a tunnel or scamper around weave poles, but you will keep moving alongside your dog. Plus, you will stay focused on your dog's progress, making split-second decisions to help her clock the best time possible, so you get a little mental stimulation, too. Agility training provides good cardiovascular, muscular, and mental exercise for you and your dog.

Agility training bonds dog and owner. Dogs are smart creatures, but it would be difficult for them to successfully complete an agility course without the aid of their owner or handler. The human member of the team guides the dog using verbal cues and hand signals, so open communication between canine and human is essential. This level of communication, and the time spent training, bond a dog and her owner in a very special way. As the dog relies on her owner for guidance on the course, she also becomes more obedient and well-behaved off the course.

What should you consider before starting an agility program?

Agility training is a strenuous exercise, so here are a few things to consider before starting this level of physical activity:

Make sure your dog is physically fit. Agility is a sport that involves lots of running and jumping, so sound joints and a healthy heart are a must. Have your veterinarian perform an overall physical exam to ensure your dog is in good physical condition before you begin training. Even young pups should be checked out because developing joints can be injured if over-stressed. Most agility associations and groups do not allow dogs under 2 years old to compete due to potential damage to the joints and growing bones. lt is a good idea to see your personal physician, too.

Consider your dog's temperament. Training can involve just you and your dog in the privacy of your own backyard, but there will be lots of dogs at training facilities and competitions. Your dog should be comfortable around strange dogs and strange people. This is especially important since your dog will be competing off-lead and will need to respond to voice commands immediately, regardless of distractions.

Figure out what makes your dog tick. Agility training is hard work that can become tiresome for you and your dog. While you may be motivated by winning awards, your dog will not be so impressed with blue ribbons. Figure out what best motivates your dog to persevere through the tough spots. Is it food, toys, or a big hug, pet, or belly rub? But keep in mind, except for physical contact, these incentives won't be allowed during an actual trial.

How do you get started with agility training?

Start by finding local agility groups in your area. Search online, ask your veterinarian, call a dog trainer, or talk to fellow pet owners at the dog park. If you want to try it yourself first, you can expose your dog to a homemade course. Place a long, wide board on two cinder blocks and have your dog walk along the plank. Then have her jump over it. Find a collapsible tunnel at a children's toy store and entice your dog to walk through it. Hang an old bike tire from a sturdy tree limb to see if your dog will jump through it. These are inexpensive ways to see if you and your dog really want to pursue this sport.

If you get serious about agility training, look for a group or private instructor for expert help learning the rules and techniques of agility trials. A good trainer will train both you and your dog. There is an art to assisting your dog through a course with finesse. With a little work, you and your dog may both exemplify the very definition of agility.

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NEWSBITES

Columbia-Greene HUMANE SOCIETY/SPCA

As part of its ongoing commitment to reducing cat overpopulation and preventing unwanted litters, the Columbia-Greene Humane Society/SPCA is offering a special low-cost spay/neuter program for cats.

For a limited time, cat owners can have their cats spayed or neutered for just $50 per cat. The package includes the spay or neuter surgery, rabies vaccination, distemper vaccination, ear cleaning, nail trimming, and other routine services typically provided during the procedure.

The special program is limited to 100 cats and appointments will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.

"Every cat that is spayed or neutered helps prevent future unwanted kittens and reduces the number of homeless animals entering shelters," said Ron Perez, President/CEO of the Columbia-Greene Humane Society/SPCA. "Programs like this are such an important part of addressing pet overpopulation, and at the same time, we help local families access affordable veterinary care. For years this has been and will remain a pillar of our services to the community."

In addition to spay and neuter services, the Columbia-Greene Humane Society/SPCA offers a variety of other low-cost veterinary services through its clinic programs. Additional vaccinations, testing, and preventive care options may be available at the time of the appointment.

Feel free to call us with any questions at (518) 828-6044 or visit our website at www.cghs.org.

Columbia-Greene HUMANE SOCIETY/SPCA

Addy is an almost 8-year-old domestic shorthair who has been with us for nearly a year. She's the perfect mix of sweet and spicy; affectionate when she wants attention, but independent enough to keep things interesting. Addy would thrive in a simple, adult-only home where she can relax and be herself. Her adoption fee has been sponsored.

125 Humane Society Rd, Hudson, NY 12534
(518) 828-6044

Please call with any questions.

This big, handsome 5-year-old gray and white domestic short hair is **Chase**. He arrived at Berkshire Humane Society due to allergies. He is quite shy initially, but once he feels comfortable with you, he is one sweet cat! Chase has lived indoors only with other cats. He would be OK to live with a cat-savvy dog and respectful teens and older, as he prefers a quieter home. If you're looking for a lovely boy who will be your constant companion, please consider adopting Chase during 'Adopt a Cat Month.' You won't be disappointed! If you are interested in learning more about adopting Chase,

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Bay Colony Pomeranian Club Rescue, baycolonypomeranianclub.org
POODLE
Poodle Rescue of New England www.poodlerescuene.org PoodleRescue@poodlerescuene.org 617-628-1425 MA
Poodle Rescue of Vermont, www.poodlerescuevt.org, 802-497-4144 VT, info@poodlerescuevt.org
PUG
Pug Rescue of New England, www.pugrescueofnewengland.org
Green Mtn Pug Rescue www.greenmtnpugrescue.com
Curly Tail Pug Rescue (NY/CT/NJ) www.curlytailpugrescue.org
RAT TERRIER
Ratbone Rescues www.ratbonerescues.com, ratbonerescue@ratbonerescues.com
ROTTWEILER
North East Rottweiler Rescue www.rottrescue.org, toll free 866-392-0102
SAINT BERNARD
Saint Bernard Rescue Foundation, www.saintrescue.org
SAMOYED
Minuteman Samoyed Club Rescue, www.doghows.org/flash/mscr/ , info@samoyedrescue.org
SHIBA INU
National Shiba Club of America Rescue, www.shibas.org/rescue.html, rescue@shibas.org
NYC Shiba Rescue, http://nycshibarescue.org, email: shibas@nycshibarescue.org, 917-591-3408 NY
SHIH TZU
American Shih Tzu Club Rescue contacts, www.americanshihtzuclub.org./rescue_committee
Shih Tzu Rescue of New England, www.petfinder.com/shelters/MA304.html, STRNE1@gmail.com
WELSH TERRIER-welshterrierrescue.org.
YORKSHIRE TERRIER
Yorkshire Terrier Club of America Rescue Inc, www.ytca.org/rescue.html

Wildlife Animal Rescue

Berkshire County Turtle Rescue
"To contribute to native turtle conservation by providing emergency treatment and rehabilitation to both native and non-native turtles."
413-663-4555

Berkshire Wildlife Services
P.O. Box 922
Hinsdale, MA
413-623-8340

Cummington Wildlife, Inc.
Cummington, MA 01026
413-695-6854

Newhouse Wildlife Rescue
Chelmsford, Massachusetts
(978) 413-4085

Dog Wags- Breeds from A to Z

CLUMBER SPANIEL

Dog of the Month

Cocker Spaniel

Cocker Spaniels are dogs belonging to two breeds of the spaniel dog type: the American Cocker Spaniel and the English Cocker Spaniel. Both are commonly called Cocker Spaniel in their countries of origin. In the early 20th century, Cocker Spaniels also included small hunting spaniels. They were bred as gun dogs.

The major difference between the English and American varieties is that the American is smaller with a shorter back, a domed head, and a shorter muzzle, while the English variety is taller with a narrower head and chest.
Cocker Spaniels are the smallest of the sporting breeds. Their small bodies are sturdy, and they move with ease. They have large eyes and a long, silky coat.

The intelligent and cheerful Cocker Spaniel has a unique ability to connect with humans and makes an excellent companion. Their gentle, affectionate and playful nature makes him especially good with kids.
They need daily exercise in the form of a brisk walk or playtime with his favorite people.Cocker Spaniels are a people pleaser, so they are relatively easy to train.
The Cocker Spaniel's origins trace back to Spain, where the breed got its start as bird hunters. For hundreds of years, the only difference in the categorization of the many breeds of spaniels was whether they hunted on land or in water. In the 19th century, however, this changed. The Cocker Spaniel was designated as its own breed, named for the woodcock it hunted and its Spanish origins. In the United States, the Cocker was developed into two distinct varieties: American and English.

PAWOSCOPES

Monthly Dog & Cat Pawoscope

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Gemini
(May 21–June 20)

BOTH-Gemini is the first of the air signs; it represents the breezes that prepare us for a new season. Pets born under this sign love diversity, are always moving about, and are intelligent and fun-loving. Curious about everything, they are also friendly and playful and love to have toys.

DOGS-Ruled by Mercury, the Gemini sign is associated with communication. Gemini dogs are usually vocal. They are busy and on the move, so they have a lot to bark about. Like their human counterparts, Gemini canines tend to be super smart and highly curious, which can lead to both fun and mischief. Their personality can change from calm to wild at the drop of a biscuit. But they have a comic quality that is thoroughly charming and will keep you entertained—and on your toes.

CATS-Gemini cats are ruled by the planet of communication, Mercury, and your fun-loving feline is likely super-social and quite vocal. From chirps to chatters and a plethora of different kinds of meows, once your kitty has found their voice, they'll use it to tell you exactly how they feel and what they want. It's also worth bearing in mind that Gemini is symbolized by the Twins, so it might feel like your cat has not just one but two personalities at times—perhaps they're super-loving one minute and aloof the next. But as a mutable sign, they'll likely be adaptable, warming up to new environments or people quicker than most cats. *https://www.dailypaws.com*

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940 MAIN STREET, GREAT BARRINGTON MA

Nutritious, Delicious, and Ready-to-Serve!

STATE of NATURE

RAW DIETS for CATS and DOGS

Only the Best Farm-Fresh Natural Ingredients

State of Nature sources only the best farm-to-table ingredients from farms local to their kitchen in New York's Hudson Valley, and, to ensure that their standards for purity, quality, and humane practices are met, they personally pick up their ingredients straight from the farm. That local sourcing with no middleman involved in processing makes for lightning-fast production and super-fresh food. From farm to freezer in less than a day!

Available in 2oz and 8oz burgers or 1lb and 5lb chubs, vacuum-sealed for freshness, State of Nature makes it easy to feed your pet a complete and balanced farm-fresh diet designed for optimum health. Available proteins: Beef, Beef Tripe, Chicken, Duck, Lamb, Mackerel, Rabbit, Turkey